

**2012-2013**

**University Attended – HEC Montreal**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

When you get here in August, the HEChange committee (who are incredibly useful by the way, get to know them as well as possible) put on a welcoming week for all the international students. You have to pay for this (about \$200 if I remember correctly) but its definitely worth it and I can't stress enough how much you HAVE to do this in order to have an amazing exchange. It basically includes pickup from the airport and a couple nights in a hotel with other exchange students, and then you have a pretty packed fortnight schedule which includes stuff like going to the Olympic Stadium, seeing some random museums and they organise nights out to traditional Quebec pubs, as well as some of the best clubs in Montreal, and they also do a bar crawl. Pretty much the best two weeks for making friends and getting mortal etc. I did it again in January to meet all the new exchanges too, but it only lasts for a week the second time around. Just to add – the committee do stuff all throughout the semester too like organise trips to places like Boston and Quebec City, and put on a sick gala at the end of each semester too.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

Classes are basically an odd melange between lectures and seminars that we have at MBS – normally like 50 of you in a classroom listening to a teacher but they ask you stuff much more often than in a lecture at MBS so be warned, its pretty interactive. Classes are three hours long which is a nightmare to start off with but you get used to it, plus they give you a 20 minute break without fail in the middle of every class so its not as horrendous as it sounds. Not a massive deal of course choices for studying in English but it's definitely not a paltry selection. Most courses have various means of assessment – you will barely find any course that is all exam based, it's always divided into groupwork/presentation/midterm/exam or some mix of the aforementioned. They place a pretty big emphasis on groupwork here but you'll be working with really enthusiastic exchange kids whose grades actually count so it's not hard to get at least somewhat motivated. I can't say I was overly impressed with the standard of teaching, it was quite boring and a lot of the professors actually just burst into French when they can't think of the word in English....plus some of the resources are in French before one of the teachers can be bothered to translate them so it can become somewhat annoying but definitely not enough to put a dampener on studying here.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I emailed Sue about twice throughout the year and she gave me very detailed help on both small matters so yeah, my experience was good with the team. I wish I'd read more of these evaluations but that's my own fault for being lazy. I would say just talk to me if you're really considering coming to HEC and have any pressing questions.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

No, I feel that we got provided with all the info that was necessary as far as I can remember...

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

Yeah the ISA (as they call it here) is really useful, they're on Facebook and respond to any query emails really quickly so I have only good things to say about them.

### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

You're not covered on Manchester's Policy and you'll need to pay a fee at the start of the year that will cover you for the entire time – I think it's about \$500ish.

### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

I was lucky enough to get a Canadian \$2000 travel bursary for my year at HEC which definitely helped with the expenses. The University didn't charge any extra fees other than the Health Insurance.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

This might be the scariest part about coming to Montreal but once you're over it then you'll have the sickest time ever. So yeah, basically you're not going to be living in halls and your accommodation won't be set up by HEC but they will give you an absolute ton of advice about where to get a place. They will send you a bunch of emails and suggest to you websites to look on where you can stay with other HEC students (websites such as Getyourplace, Kijiji etc). I personally got my apartment from randomly seeing an advert on the HEChange Facebook group but most of my friends got their places sorted, before coming to Montreal, on the aforementioned websites, and that is what I would suggest too. Some people did turn up without a place (really not uncommon here) and HEC put on a ton of workshops in order to help you get a place with other students as quickly as possible. In terms of suggesting where to live, I lived really near HEC all semester. It's good in terms of the fact that you're close to University, but if you want to live in the real heart of Montreal, I would suggest living on Le Plateau (this is basically covered by Mont-Royal and Sherbrooke stations) which is the really cool area of Montreal with tonnes of beautiful coffee shops – basically the most fashionable place to live. You could also live downtown (Peel, McGill, Atwater stations) but it might be more expensive and a little bit more hectic in the mornings than the orange line of the Metro. But wherever you choose to live, Montreal is a pretty small city and I spent an absolute ton of time in basically all areas – living close to University didn't mean that I didn't get to spend time in all the areas that I wanted so don't panic too much either way.

### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Everyone gets around using the Metro and Bus systems – in order to use these in any sort of cost efficient manner, you need to buy an OPUS card (the uni will tell you where and when you can buy these – its pretty much the equivalent of an Oyster Card) and pay \$175 for a 4-month pass, and this covers the Metro and Bus systems. This is literally essential, the daily/weekly rates are extortionate and you're going to be using the Metro and Bus pretty much every day. In terms of travel, Montreal is really well located for trips to New York, Toronto and Boston so you can get really cheap bus travel to those locations. The social life here is amazing – read above for Welcoming Week stuff and my appraisal about the committee – there is an exchange night out every Tuesday as well as something called a '4@7' every Thursday, which is effectively where the school opens up from 4pm til 7pm and everyone gets wasted (this is particularly good when its sunny). Being on exchange at HEC won't necessarily throw you into being integrated with the local students but being chummy with the committee will mean you'll meet a ton of Quebecers, who are generally really affable people. There's a ton of sport and activity groups too, just like at Manchester. One thing I will warn you about is the weather – it will be absolutely beautiful when you arrive, just like a holiday, but be warned, December, January and February will be like nothing you've ever experienced in the UK.

Temperatures can reach -30c and its ridiculous, your face will be numb within 10 seconds of stepping outside – it is a HUGE culture shock but as long as you're well prepared (winter clothes sell really cheap here if you look in the right places) then it won't be upsetting or anything. It's definitely an experience stepping out of a club when its -20c outside at 4am and then looking for somewhere to eat poutine with all your drunk friends....something you won't ever forget! Also remember that the main language here is French! Everyone here is bilingual though so don't be too worried if you don't speak any French but it wouldn't hurt to learn a few words just to not look like an ignorant foreigner.

One final thing I would say is that living in Montreal has been an absolute privilege; it has all the cuteness and cultural nuances of France, but with much more pleasant people and an all-around relaxed atmosphere – it really is one of the most beautiful places to live.

#### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**An absolutely life-changing experience shared with some of the most amazing people I'll ever meet in one of the most beautiful cities in the world!**